



PLATE XXXIII 90 f.5b. The beautiful Mount Trikūta (Triple-peaked), the dwelling of various heavenly beings, to the lake at the foot of which comes a herd of rampaging elephants. By Sāhīb Dīn.

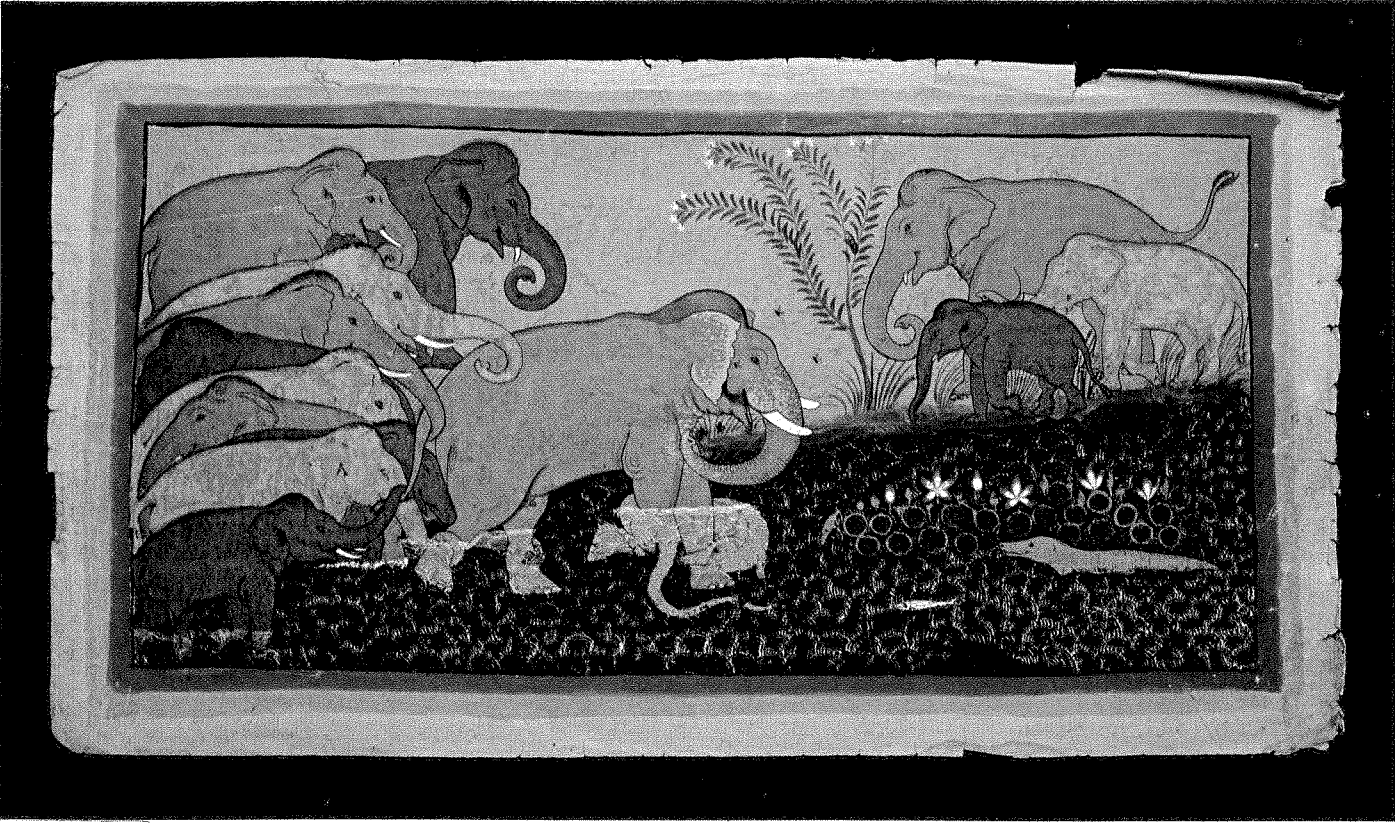


PLATE XXXIV 90 f.6. The leader of the elephants has his leg seized by a powerful crocodile who dwells in the sacred lake.

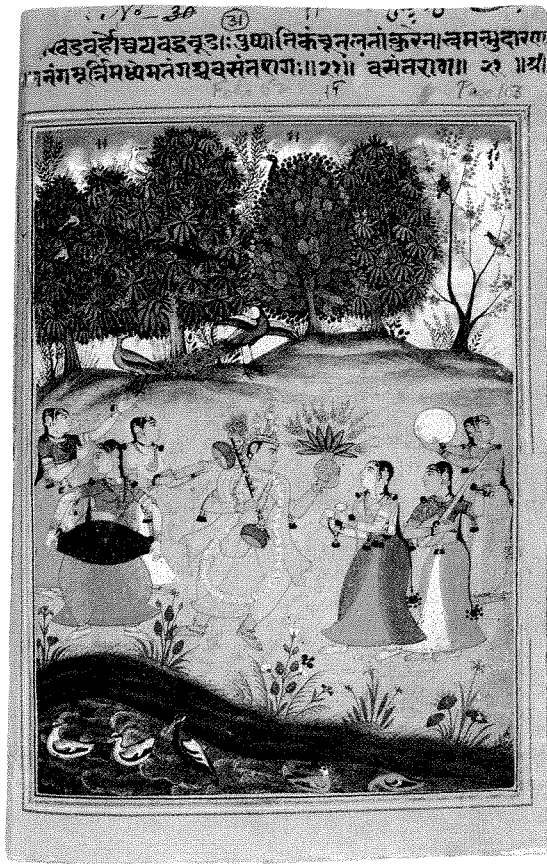


PLATE XXXV 89 f.52. *Vasanta rāga*, celebrating the coming of spring.

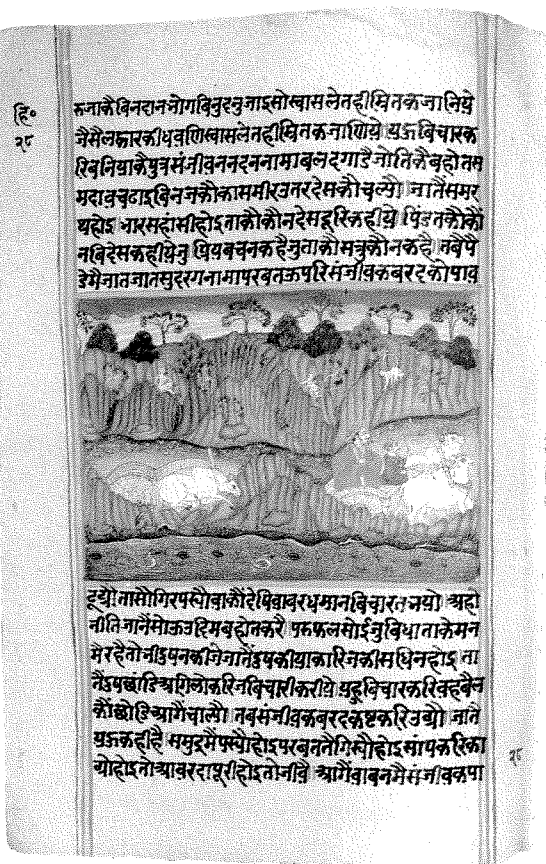


PLATE XXXVI 101 f.28b. The merchant abandons his injured ox Sanjivaka in the wilderness. By Dhano.

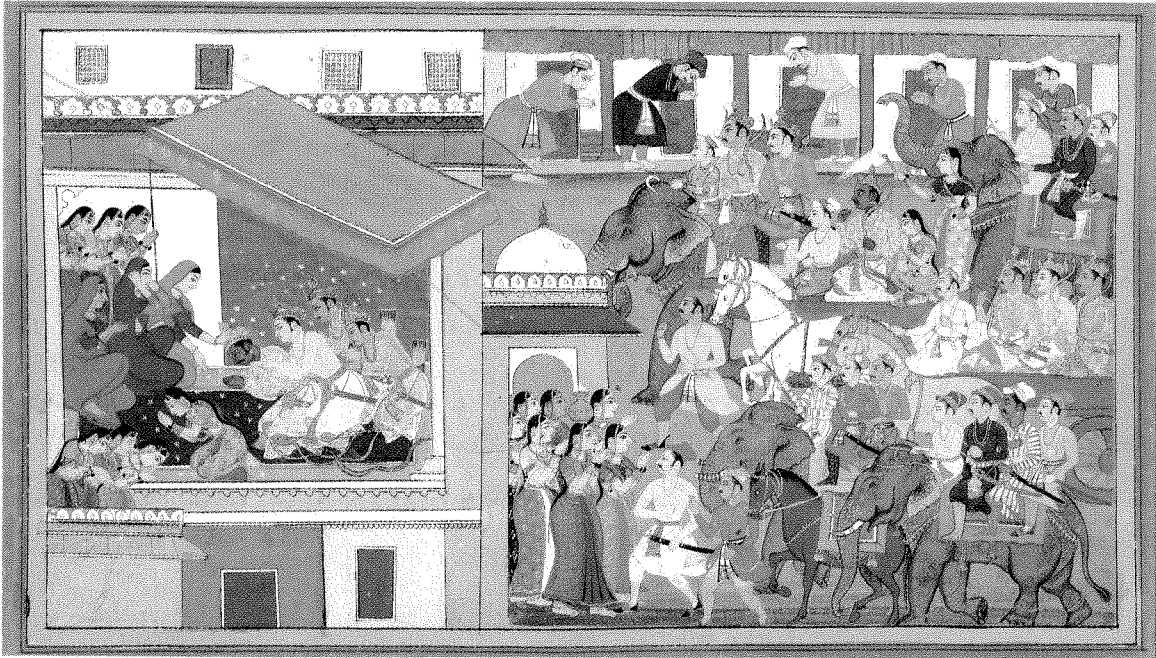
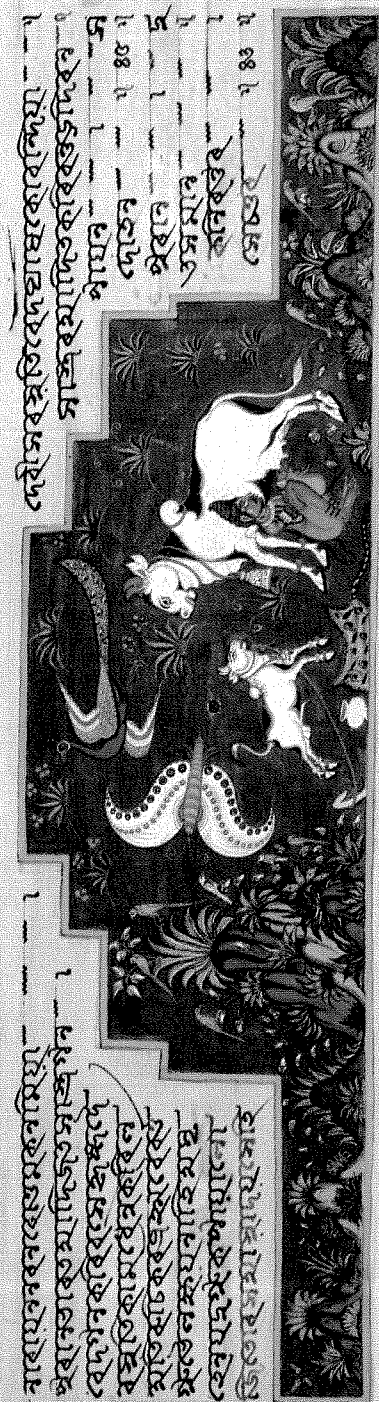


PLATE XXXVII 96 f.202. Rāma and the exiles return in triumph to Ayodhyā. By Sāhīb Dīn.

PLATE XXXVIII (overleaf) 122 f.10b (above). Vyāsa milking the *Purāṇa* out of the *Kāmadhenu*, the Wish-fulfilling Cow.
122 f.11 (below). Sauti begins the narration of the *Purāṇa* to Shaunaka in the latter's hermitage of Naimishāranya. Both by Durgārāma Betha.



Painted and lacquered pen-box (*kalamdān*) containing inkpots, scissors, spoon and polisher. Kashmir, 19th century. Victoria and Albert Museum, I.S. 1119, A-D-1874.

of course survived through later manuscripts. But we have only a small proportion of the dramatic and poetic literature of these centuries and scarcely anything from even earlier periods. Much of the vast Buddhist literature in Sanskrit, whether of the Lesser or Greater Vehicles, has disappeared, while even the Jainas, who early took recourse to writing, managed very early to lose the most ancient strata of their sacred literature. The reasons are clear. The inability of the materials to withstand the rigours of the Indian climate, the heat and humidity, with its attendant superfluity of voracious insects meant that a century or two was the most any manuscript could generally be expected to survive. And the Indian scholar of old, who had worn-out manuscripts copied afresh, would not keep the old one or send it to the temple library but committed it to the sacred waters of the rivers, for both substance and content to be reabsorbed into the seamless web that is the universe. Also wholesale destruction occurred in the 13th and again in the 18th centuries in periods of invasion and civil wars. So that when secular manuscript libraries were established in India, there was little that was very ancient left to collect. Most of the royal libraries were composed principally of new manuscripts, many of them beautifully written and illustrated. It was not until the establishment of British rule in India that systematic searches were undertaken for the assembling of manuscripts in great repositories, so that the literary history of India could be written. But the study of the history of book-illustration, with which we are chiefly concerned, has hardly begun. So much in the early period has been lost, and so much of the medieval period is controversial, that new discoveries are anxiously awaited. And each new discovery only tells us how little we know and how much more complicated the picture is than we can yet comprehend. And even the Mughal period, outwardly so well documented and well represented, is at its beginning mysterious and controversial. So this book is full of doubts and possibilities, and puts forward theories with which many other scholars would disagree. Our purpose is to trace the development of the art of the book, by which we mean manuscripts of beauty whether on account of their format or their calligraphy, their illumination or illustrations, or binding, from the earliest discoveries known to us to the end of the traditions of manuscript production and illustration in the 19th century caused by the twin modern invention of the printing press and the camera. We shall discuss them in terms of religions and cultures and formats and patrons of apparently great diversity. Yet at the end of the day we shall see that India has absorbed, as she always has done, the ways of her invaders and turned them to her own purposes without losing her essential Indianness in the process.

Early Manuscript Illumination

It is not yet possible to determine precisely when the Indians began to treat their manuscripts as something other than mere purveyors of information, and to treat them as physical objects capable of being made beautiful both in the way the information was written and in decorations applied over and above the actual textual matter. Calligraphy is an art which finds no mention in ancient Indian literature; certainly there is no surviving treatise on the subject. Yet from the earliest manuscript survivals it is clear that some scribes took immense pains to produce beautiful and measured harmony with their pen, to invest the page with dignity through the use of majestically large and separate letters or of lines proceeding in measured, rhythmic tread across the great width of a page. The former of these devices is found only in Buddhist manuscripts on paper from Central Asia about the middle of the first millennium AD, such as the Kashgar Lotus Sūtra, which must have been a conscious imitation of large-lettered Chinese calligraphy. Yet the manuscripts are totally Indian in character, being in the *poṭhī* format but on paper, and resemble large-scale birch-bark manuscripts from India. They conform in shape to no Chinese model. Likewise the script is the Central Asian variant of the Gupta script, used also for the Iranian languages of the area. With what devotion these scribes must have sat down to copy with the utmost beauty known to them the Lotus Sūtra or the Perfection of Wisdom in language as remote to them as Hebrew to us.

In the Indian subcontinent itself, examples of early manuscripts of similarly majestic size have been found only in the excavated *stūpas* of Gilgit. Here they are on large birch-bark sheets, but the script is much smaller than their Central Asian counterparts, being remarkable for the regularity of the spacing of the letters and lines, achieving a dignified, rhythmic whole (No. 1). These manuscripts also are of Buddhist origin, as are all calligraphically noteworthy early manuscripts. Their only decorative elements are concentric roundels of considerable size, and a few elaborately designed versions of the Buddhist *dharmacakra*. An early tradition refers to the copying of Buddhist texts in golden letters, but there is no evidence of such a technique being practised in early India. The tradition in Nepal of writing with gold ink on blue-black paper may now be dated comfortably to the 12th century (No. 11), but this type of paper seems never to have been used in India. The reference in the Nepalese *Vaṃśāvalī* (Chronicles) to one Yashodharā fleeing in the reign of Shankaradeva with the *Prajñāpāramitā* written in the year 225 in letters of gold must refer to the Nepal era (the date equals AD 1105), rather than to the chronicle's explicit citation of the Vikrama era (*i.e.* AD 170), when only palm leaf and birch bark were available for manuscripts. The occasional attempts to fix gold on to palm leaves as in the miniatures of the *Pañcarakṣā* dated *c.* 1057 (No. 4) show how difficult it was; an entire manuscript in gold script would have been impossible to fix. So the reference must be to paper and hence corroborates the early dates for the two 12th-century manuscripts on paper from Nepal (No. 11).

The earliest illustrated manuscripts are found from the last two centuries before the collapse of the old Hindu states system about

1200—a few pairs of manuscript covers from Kashmir in a style more related to Central Asian painting than to that of India, a considerable number of illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts and covers of Buddhist texts from eastern India under the Pāla dynasty and from Nepal in a closely related style, whence come also a few Hindu ones, and a much smaller number of Jaina examples from Gujarat and Rajasthan, with one isolated Jaina example from Karnataka. Are they merely the accidental survivals of a much more widespread tradition, with many centuries of development behind them? Or are they the earliest survivals of a tradition that only began at about the same time?

The Indian texts of the first millennium AD are full of references to painting. We read of pictures painted on walls, of picture galleries, of painted wooden panels or paintings on cloth, of the art of portraiture. There are various technical manuals besides, on how to prepare surfaces and means of achieving certain technical effects such as foreshortening. We can still see the pitifully few remnants of the classic art of fresco painting at sites such as Ajantā and Ellora, and see that the manuals and artistic practice usually agree. The Tibetan historian Tāranātha has given us a valuable account of the different styles of painting practised in ancient India. There are, however, no references whatever to the illustration of manuscripts, whether of palm leaf or birch bark. Any *argumentum ex silentio* is not necessarily decisive in an Indian context, and since so few Indian manuscripts pre-date the 11th century we would still perhaps be justified in keeping our options open. However, the evidence of Central Asia may perhaps be taken into account, where innumerable leaves and fragments of Indian-language manuscripts, on palm leaf, birch bark and paper, in date from the 2nd century to the 10th, have been discovered. Not one of them bears an illustration. It is immaterial in this context whether these manuscripts were actually written in India or in Central Asia. Had the art been at all widespread in India we could legitimately expect some evidence to turn up in Central Asia, either in a fragment of Indian provenance, or in a Central Asian imitation of an Indian manuscript, for where in script and format the Central Asian scribes imitated Indian exemplars, they would surely have imitated illuminations also. It is noteworthy that the only illustrated manuscript material to be unearthed in Central Asia is either of Chinese inspiration or of Manichaean origin, and we know from Arabic sources of the habit of the Iranian Manichaeans of illustrating their manuscripts, an art learnt from the Byzantines. It is quite possible, however, that the illustration of wooden covers would have had a period of some development before 1000, especially in western India and Kashmir, and our remarks here apply only to the actual folios of manuscripts.

If then it would seem unlikely that the illustration of palm-leaf manuscripts did not occur much before about the year 1000, what was the inspiration that started them along this path? The earliest decorated Jaina manuscripts from 1060 contain drawings and diagrams, with coloured miniatures not appearing until the 12th century, so that we must suppose that the art originated in eastern India and Nepal, and spread to other areas of western and southern India, *i.e.* it originated in a specifically Buddhist environment. Now it is noteworthy that none of the early manuscripts are in fact 'illustrated' in the sense of the pictures illustrating events described in the text. The most favoured Buddhist text by far, the *Prajñāpāramitā*, is a work of the most abstruse

metaphysics, on the nature of Buddhahood, Bodhisattvahood, and of Wisdom. The miniatures used to illustrate it are usually of the Buddhas, transcendental (the Jinas) or Mortal, the Bodhisattvas, goddesses, and fearsome divinities, and the eight great events in the life of Gautama the Buddha. Their presence in the manuscript has no connection with the text itself, which is far earlier than the developments of the Mahāyāna which led to the proliferation of these divinities. The manuscripts were generally commissioned by pious laymen as acts guaranteeing spiritual merit, the greatest rewards coming from manuscripts of the greatest beauty. In the Tantric school of Buddhism prevalent in eastern India at this time, the act of painting a *maṇḍala* or an equivalent was more a spiritual than an artistic exercise, and meditation on the depicted divinities for the initiate served to concentrate the mind on one or other aspects of the divine. It was these developments in Vajrayāna Buddhism which would seem to have precipitated the illustration of manuscripts to form, as it were, *maṇḍalas* in miniature, bringing divine aid to the protection of the manuscripts and to the spiritual well-being of both donor and artist.

Technically, the possibilities of decorating palm-leaf manuscripts are limited by the nature of the medium itself. The decorative elements apart from calligraphy are threefold. Firstly, small figurative paintings occupying the centre of a leaf, or sometimes two or three such paintings occupying the centres of the two or three columns of text into which a large leaf would be divided, the number of stringholes being the deciding factor in the arrangement of the columns. Such paintings invariably occupy the full height of a leaf, but rarely exceed that measurement in width, and are usually contained within painted margins. If larger compositions were essayed, utilizing the entire width of the leaf, none has survived; it is improbable that this could have been a standard feature as the tension generated by the turning of leaves in such manuscripts results in flaking of the painted surface to a far greater extent than in painted paper leaves of a manuscript in codex format.

A second decorative possibility was afforded by the margins between the columns of text and at the edges. Many surviving manuscripts have painted geometrical and arabesque designs on at least all those leaves which contain paintings (Nos. 5–9); while a very few have little figures of monks, worshippers, the Buddha, *caityas* etc. in these positions (No. 10). Related to this type of decoration is the provision of little vignettes of animals or flowers or diagrams to mark chapter endings as in No. 8 where it is restricted to those leaves which already have central paintings on them. The third element was the wooden binding-boards (*paṭa*) at top and bottom of the manuscript, both inside and outside, on which could be painted much larger compositions than was possible on the leaves.

The most usual cycle in Buddhist manuscripts is of 18 paintings arranged in groups of six, with three per side, at beginning, middle, and end of the manuscripts of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, consisting usually of the eight great miracles in the life of the Buddha, some of the five Jinas (transcendent Buddhas), the goddess *Prajñāpāramitā*, and some of the great Bodhisattvas (Nos. 2, 5–6, 9). One Pāla manuscript of this text originally had no fewer than 78 paintings, with in addition to the cycle of 18, a pair of paintings marking the end of each of the 32 chapters (No. 8), forming perhaps a most complex *maṇḍala*. Other Buddhist texts have different cycles. The *Pañcarakṣā*, a set of five charms dedicated to five



8 ff. 136b, 137 (details). The Bodhisattvas Maitreya (?) and Avalokiteshvara (?)—by the 12th century, iconographical standards had collapsed in painting (No. 8, p. 33).

different protective goddesses, is illustrated with their images, and sometimes in addition those of the five Jinas to whom they are linked (No. 4). The illustrations of the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* are known only from an incomplete manuscript; here each of the 53 surviving folios (which comprise the bulk of the text) contains two paintings, and uniquely among Pāla manuscripts, some of the narrative episodes in the *sūtra* are illustrated (No. 10). The Lotus Sūtra, despite the immense popularity of the scripture, is usually illustrated only by one or two introductory paintings, as are a few other Buddhist texts.

The wooden covers gave much greater scope and freedom to the artist than the restricted space available on one of the folios, but only rarely was the opportunity taken to depict a fully integrated painting (No. 12). More usually the covers were divided into compartments, with scenes from the life of Buddha on one, and *Prajñāpāramitā* with attendants and worshippers on the other. However, there are very few examples of a Pāla manuscript surviving complete with its original painted covers, which were the parts of the manuscript most exposed to damage; the *Prajñāpāramitā* in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston dated c. 1134 is perhaps one of them. It is quite possible that none of the 11th-century manuscripts had illustrated covers, as the covers must have been deemed less intimately connected with the text itself, and less capable of imparting magical protection. Only two sets of covers are of possible 11th-century date, both of Nepalese origin, enclosing unillustrated manuscripts dated 1028 and 1054—however, these covers do not fit into the stylistic development of Nepalese painting between two securely dated manuscripts of 1015 (No. 3) and 1071 and are more likely to be 12th century; it was in this century and the next that many Nepalese covers were given to earlier Nepalese and Pāla manuscripts (see Nos. 2, 3, 5, and 9).

Turning to the Jaina manuscripts, we can see that again the miniatures do not illustrate the text but are rather images of Jaina divinities. The Tantric element that led to the illustration of Buddhist manuscripts is apparent in Jainism to a much lesser extent, but even so the *Vidyādevīs* (goddesses of wisdom), the Jaina equivalent of the Buddhist *Prajñāpāramitā*, occur in two of the surviving documents, on a pair of covers (No. 15) which show significant influence from Pāla art and on the leaves of a manuscript dated 1161, where their function can only be magically protective. The earliest surviving illustrated Jaina manuscript is dated 1060, and has delightful drawings of the goddess *Shrī* and the love-god *Kāma*, with elephants, vases etc., and other manuscripts of this date have drawings of lotuses and diagrams in similar style. They apparently continue a tradition found in birch-bark manuscripts (No. 1). Illustrated manuscripts with paintings are not found before the 12th century, and have just a few opening illustrations of the Jinas, the gods and goddesses, various monks, including sometimes possibly the authors of the work, and the patrons of the manuscript. No large-scale iconographic sequence is attempted, except possibly for the *Vidyādevī* sequence, nor in any 12th-century manuscripts is there any attempt at a narrative sequence illustrating the texts. The texts chosen for illumination are not confined to a few favourites as with the Buddhists, but include various parts of the Jaina Canon or its commentaries. It is only by accident that these illustrated manuscripts have survived rather than others, but it is not without significance that they are all canonical texts,

and that the miniatures in them have no connection whatever with the text. In other words, they must be serving the same purpose as the Buddhist miniatures, that of magical protection of the text and the bestowing of benefits on the donor. The same is true of the only known illuminated Digambara palm-leaf manuscript, a group of semi-canonical works on *karma* dated c. 1112 from southern India which has the same set of miniatures—divinities, donors, monks, etc. The earliest miniatures which actually occur in texts capable of illustration are of early 13th-century date in works on the lives of Mahāvīra and Neminātha, but the opportunity so to do is not taken, and the miniatures are simply of the Jinas and the donors. In fact, the earliest manuscript with narrative paintings is dated 1288, a *Subāhukathā*, with 23 miniatures, and the earliest such manuscript of the *Kalpasūtra*, the life of the Jina Mahāvīra which was the standard text for illustration and presentation in the 15th and 16th centuries, is not for another century, and is dated 1370. Even this has only six miniatures, and it is not until the roughly contemporary *Kalpasūtra* from Idar that there is a manuscript with a set of 34 miniatures fully illustrating the narrative portions of the *Kalpasūtra*. By this time of course there was considerable influence from the Islamic world on the arts of India, and it is quite possible that narrative paintings in Jaina manuscripts are in imitation of the Persian book-arts. From the subject-matter of the miniatures in these Jaina manuscripts which we have traced from 1060 to 1370, it would appear that the art of manuscript illustration must have begun in western India only in the 11th century, and doubtless under the stimulus of emulating Buddhist manuscripts. The drawings in the 11th-century manuscripts, the lack of fixed iconographical schemes in those of the 12th century, the slow realization of the possibilities of narrative illustration, all point to this conclusion.

On the other hand, the paintings on the covers (*paṭlīs*) of Jaina manuscripts seem infinitely more assured than those on palm leaves, and it is possible that there is a longer tradition behind them. There are indeed references in Jaina literature to painting *paṭṭakas*, which may be cloth or wood panels. The Jaina covers from western India are concerned quite often with historical events of importance to the Jinas, such as the meeting between the Shvetambara Jaina polymath Vādi Devasūri and the Digambara scholar Kumudachandra for the purposes of theological debate in 1124 at the court of Siddharāja Jayasimha of Gujarat, or the consecration of the temple of Mahāvīra at Marot in Marwar by the famous Jaina *ācārya* Jinadatta Sūri (No. 16). Quite a large proportion of the 20 or so surviving Jaina *paṭlīs* do not depict either historical events or standard divinities, but on one of their sides include a flowering creeper motif which loops around a large variety of birds and animals—monkeys, geese, elephants, even a giraffe—revealing a delight in nature that is one of the enduring motifs of western Indian painting (No. 15).

Calligraphically these manuscripts are of great beauty, especially the Buddhist ones. The script used in the latter is the ornamental *Siddhamātrkā* ('Perfect-measure') or *Kuṭila* (crooked) script, so called from the marked twist at the bottom of the vertical stroke of each character ending in the finest of points. At its best the characters proceed with measured and even tread across the leaf, the heavy horizontal and vertical strokes being balanced by the lighter curves between of the characteristic portions of the letter, by the sublinear twist and by the flourishes of vowel indicators above the line, most markedly above the

top line. This script was already archaic by the 11th century. In this particular form it is found only in manuscripts from the Buddhist monasteries. The Buddhist manuscripts from Nepal tend to use the early *Nāgarī* script to much lighter effect, although some have the *Siddhamātrkā* (No. 3). However, in Nepal from the 15th century there was an archaistic revival of the *Kuṭila*, called *Raṇjanā*, using gold ink on blue-black paper. Although the effect of these manuscripts is of great richness, the *Raṇjanā* is a complex character of no great calligraphic beauty, being heavy in effect without comparable dignity. It is moreover an almost unreadable character, and was probably never intended to be otherwise, for the texts written in it are of a very limited range and copied for pious purposes of donation to monasteries. There they remained wrapped and unread—like the earlier *Kuṭila* manuscripts brought from India, except for the annual *pustakapūjā*, or book-worshipping day, when they were placed on public view and their covers anointed with sandal-paste, which still adheres to many of them (No. 7).

The script used in the western Jaina manuscripts was an early form of *Nāgarī* with characteristics that mark it out as Jaina—special forms of certain letters and diphthongal signs which normally protrude above the line always occurring before the letter (e and o) or with a combination of both (ai and au). It is an elegant rather than monumental script, and remained characteristic of the Shvetambara Jinas until the 18th century. The southern Digambara Jaina manuscripts used an early Kannada hand, of no particular beauty.

All the early illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts which have survived from eastern India are of Buddhist texts, while all those from western and southern India are of Jaina ones. The Buddhist manuscripts owe their survival to having been taken to Nepal by monks fleeing the destruction of their monasteries by the Turkish invaders about 1200, and deposited usually in temple libraries there. The Jaina ones were in any case deposited in *bhaṇḍārs* or libraries attached to temples in Jaina strongholds in western and southern India such as Jaiselmer, Patan, Cambay and Moodabidri, and they and their contents have survived to the present day. There are no survivals of a Hindu tradition of manuscript illustration in India from this time, but there certainly was one in Nepal, represented by documents from the 12th and 13th centuries (Nos. 13, 14). The dated Buddhist documents from India are all in the regnal years of the Pāla monarchs, who were Buddhist, except for one manuscript dated in the reign of the Hindu monarch of south Bengal, Harivarman, to which area one more manuscript can be assigned on stylistic grounds (No. 10), but it would be dangerous on account of the paucity of early manuscript material from Hindu Bengal to argue that Hindu illustrated manuscripts should also have survived had any been done there. Jaina *bhaṇḍārs* in western India have a catholic content that includes early and important manuscripts of Buddhist and Hindu texts, but no early Hindu illustrated manuscript is to be found in them. Again one can argue no case for this that the Hindus of western India did not decorate their manuscripts as the number of Jaina illustrated ones is in any case extremely small. We have argued above that the Hindus of India did not have a proper manuscript and library tradition until later, so it is in any case unlikely that there would have been many illustrated ones from this time, but we cannot at this stage rule out the possibility. From the Nepalese evidence it is clear that Hindu illustrated manuscripts are far

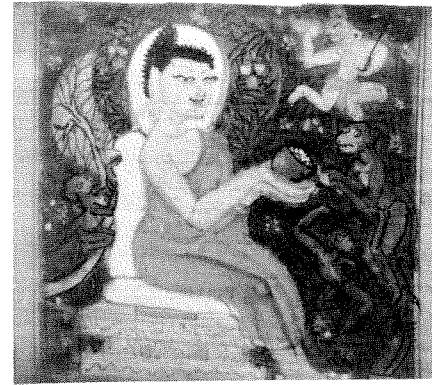
outweighed in number by Buddhist ones, as is to be expected, even though it would appear that the number of adherents of both religions in Nepal at this time was roughly equal.

From the evidence presented by later illustrated manuscripts of Hindu, and Muslim, texts from Bengal (No.43), Assam (Nos.119–22) and Orissa (Nos.115–8), in which there are stylistic continuities of the Pāla tradition, the most striking being the placing of figures under scalloped arches or their derivatives, whether in interior or exterior scenes, it is possible to argue that the Pāla style could not have been confined just to artists working in Buddhist monasteries, but must have been widespread throughout eastern India, at least in wall paintings, if not in manuscripts, and that likewise it must have been used for Hindu paintings, even though the earliest of these manuscripts is of 16th-century date. The former point is indeed proven by the covers of the 1446 Buddhist manuscript from Arrah in Bihar (No.31), which are descended in style directly from the Pāla tradition, but 250 years after the destruction of the monasteries of Nālandā and Vikramashīla.

If, as we believe, manuscripts were first illustrated in India about AD 1000 specifically to add magical power and protection to the manuscripts of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, it is hardly to be wondered at that there are so few Hindu manuscripts illustrated, as there would have been hardly any occasion to do so. The precise iconographic depiction of a deity as an aid to meditation did not have the same force or rationale in Hinduism as in Tantric Buddhism. Those Hindu illustrated manuscripts which have survived from Nepal are identical in style to the Buddhist ones, coming often perhaps from the same brush, but painted without the same religious and philosophical significance. The pair of covers (No.13) showing the avatars of Vishnu, for example, is decidedly odd iconographically; the image of Vishnu *Anantaśayana* (lying on the snake Ananta) seems to be confused with Brahmā in the multi-headed form of the recumbent divinity, while some of the avatars are conventional Bodhisattva representations. The hand which painted them was more used by far to Buddhist manuscripts.

Any discussion of the style of the Pāla Buddhist manuscripts is hampered by the paucity of securely dated and provenanced material. The dated manuscripts are all given in the regnal years of kings, with no distinctions between them even if there be more than one king of the same name—three Gopālas, two Mahīpālas, etc. Opinion is also divided as to the chronology of the Pāla monarchs, both relative and absolute. Only five of the illustrated manuscripts give their provenance—three come from the great monastic university of Nālandā (Nos.5, 9) one from the monastery of Vikramashīla (No.7), and one much damaged, from Uddandapuri (Bodleian Ms. Sansk. c.13(R). Absolutely fixed are the manuscripts dated in the reigns of Nayapāla (c.1043–58), Rāmapāla (c.1082–1130), and Govindapāla (1161–c.1170), which group includes two of the manuscripts from Nālandā.

The styles employed vary considerably. On the one hand is a style which employs a sinuous and flowing line able of itself to suggest volume, which is also achieved through gradations of colour tone, in harmoniously composed groups of figures (usually exemplified by part of the Mahīpāla manuscript in the Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta); on the other is a style which uses an angular and distorted line and flat colour planes with only the most perfunctory attempts at modelling, in



2 ff.127b, 128 (details). The Buddha is offered honey by the monkeys, and tames the elephant Nalagiri, two of the eight great episodes from his life (No.2, p.30).

simplified groups (the other Mahīpāla manuscript in Cambridge University Library) (No.2). Attempts have been made to classify the first of these styles as 'early Pāla' because of its affinity with the classical frescoes at Ajantā, and the brittle style as 'late Pāla' because of its affinity with the norm in medieval Indian painting from the 14th century on. However, neither Mahīpāla manuscript can be later than c.1070, firmly in the centre of the probable time span covered by the surviving manuscripts (c.1000–1170), while manuscript paintings of unquestionably later date (those dated in the reigns of Rāmapāla and Govindapāla, Nos.5, 6, 9) show in their handling of modelling and line more of an affinity with the so-called 'early' style than with the 'late' one.

A more profitable line of enquiry towards establishing a relative chronology lies perhaps in an analysis of the iconographic content of the paintings, and the way in which certain conventions from the first half of the period are misunderstood by painters in the latter half. A notable example is the use of thrones, cushions and haloes. It is usual for seated divinities in manuscripts dated in the Rāmapāla period to have a lotus or double-lotus base beneath them, and a cushion behind them, which hides the lower part of a throne-back, the top of which protrudes above the cushion on either side of the divinity's head. They can also have a double halo, a small one round the head and a larger one around the entire body encompassing also the small halo. The earliest securely dated manuscript to show the double halo is the Nayapāla manuscript in Cambridge (No.4) of c.1057, but this has no throne-backs or cushions. Of the two manuscripts dated in the reign of Mahīpāla I (c.995–1043) or II (c.1075–80) which are either slightly later than the Nayapāla manuscript or 50 years earlier, the Calcutta manuscript has double haloes while the Cambridge manuscript (No.2) has a small, single one. As for the throne-backs, in the Rāmapāla period, artists either no longer recognized them for what they were or else deliberately ignored their real nature, for the throne-top is tilted at right angles to the axis of the divinity's head. They have often been termed flames issuing from the divinities' shoulders. Moreover, the standing Buddha and the Buddha lying down in his *parinirvāṇa* scene are each encumbered with cushion and throne-top, and with double haloes also in the latest manuscripts. The standing Buddhas in the Calcutta Mahīpāla manuscript display the accompanying throne-back and cushion, while many of the divinities also display the double halo, features which would seem to argue against the early date (c.1000, in the reign of Mahīpāla I) suggested for it. With the possible exception of one miniature, that of the birth of the Buddha, there is nothing in this manuscript that necessarily places it much earlier than Rāmapāla manuscripts, with which it is stylistically linked. On the other hand, the Cambridge Mahīpāla manuscript does not display any of these features, so that on iconographic grounds we arrive paradoxically at the conclusion diametrically opposite to that usually propounded for these two manuscripts on stylistic grounds, namely that the Calcutta manuscript belongs to the Mahīpāla I period and the Cambridge to Mahīpāla II. We believe the precise opposite to be true, and date them c.1080 and c.1000 respectively. An early dating for the Cambridge manuscript is suggested by other arguments also (see No.2).

An examination of the evidence from Nepal reinforces these arguments. There are two incontrovertibly 11th-century illustrated manuscripts from Nepal, dated 135/1015 in Cambridge University Library

(No.3) and 191/1071 in the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. These display the same format, the same type of text as the Pāla manuscripts, except that the paintings are mostly accompanied by a caption identifying the subject as a divinity from, or worshipped in, such and such a locality. Frequently, the painting shows the divinity as an image, *i.e.* as a painted representation of a statue, with accompanying small worshippers. Where this is not the case, we may take the painting to be the iconographic representation of the particular aspect of the divinity worshipped in a particular location.

Stylistically, the two manuscripts vary greatly. The earlier is a vigorous, but crude, provincial style, the latter the most perfect of all surviving illustrated manuscripts of the period, in line, modelling, colouring and composition. Both, however, are distinctively and unmistakably Nepalese, even though they have not yet developed the characteristics of the true Nepalese style of the 12th century, as they are presumably closer to the vanished Indian school of painting from which both the Nepalese and Pāla styles spring. In both are missing the conventions of throne-backs and cushions which have been discussed above, while in neither has any divinity more than one, small halo. It would be an extreme position to argue from Nepalese evidence that all Pāla paintings displaying these characteristics must be later than 1071, but it is nonetheless a powerful piece of corroborating evidence that they are so.

The crudity of the Nepalese manuscript of 1015 strikes a chord when compared with that of the Cambridge Mahīpāla manuscript, the crudity not of provincial backwardness but of stylistic innovation, and it is possible that these two manuscripts (Nos.2, 3) represent the earliest attempts to produce illustrated palm-leaf manuscripts in Nepal and eastern India. We have seen that there are no literary references to the illustration of manuscripts in earlier works mentioning paintings, but art-historians have argued that the comparative perfection of the Calcutta Mahīpāla manuscript proved a definite stylistic link with a school of post-Gupta fresco painting in eastern India. However, if we accept the re-ordering of the illustrated Pāla manuscripts proposed here on iconographic grounds, there are only three manuscripts earlier than the Calcutta 'classic' manuscripts of 1071 from Nepal and the Mahīpāla manuscript of c.1080, viz. the Cambridge Mahīpāla manuscript (c.1000) and Nayapāla manuscript (c.1057), and the Cambridge Nepal manuscript of 1015, all of which are experimental in style. The first of these (No.2) employs garish colours, a jerky, unfluent line, with faces fixed in perpetual grimaces. As for the so-called crudity of the paintings of the Nepalese manuscript of 1015 (No.3) they are in an extremely vigorous style that lacks the classical harmony displayed by the 1071 manuscript in Calcutta; an artist is coming to grips for the first time possibly with the problems of reducing to a tiny scale paintings on a much larger scale, and he is tempted to cram too much in. The paintings in this manuscript are astonishingly detailed for their tiny compass, and in addition to the main figure and its shrine, often contain numerous other figures or objects or details of landscape. By the time of the 1071 manuscript a truer art of manuscript illustration had been developed. It had been realized that it was not possible to cram so much in without sacrificing plastic qualities which the artists also valued; thus in the later manuscript the central figures are much larger, the architectural elements have been greatly



4 ff.19b, 20 (details). Two of the group of divinities accompanying Mahāmāyūrī—the Bodhisattva Maitreya, and the goddess Tārā (No.4, p.31).

reduced, and the subsidiary figures much more sensibly organized. The result is a truer art of book illustration, even though at the sacrifice of the vigour of the earlier style. No material is available between these two dates to enable us to see this process in transition. The Nayapāla manuscript (No.4) is a definite improvement technically, but experiments with the gilding of the flesh of all the human figures, a none too successful experiment as most of it has disappeared. It was not apparently repeated in the later Pāla manuscripts. We are here, it seems, witnessing early attempts to translate styles used in fresco or other large-scale paintings into a miniature compass, and it is not to be supposed that the techniques to do so could be acquired immediately or that the translation could be accomplished without a crashing of gears. From the available evidence it took about 70 years to evolve both the classic Pāla style which we associate with the reigns of Mahīpāla II, Rāmapāla, and Gopāla III, covering the period c.1075–1143, and the classic Nepalese style.

The iconographic peculiarities of the Pāla school such as throne-backs and cushions accompanying the standing Buddha argue a school that was becoming increasingly atrophied and decadent, and they are common to all the later manuscripts. No doubt the earlier manuscripts contained paintings that were scaled-down versions of larger frescoes or *paṭas*, but once an iconographic norm had been established the evidence suggests that the paintings were copied from existing patterns almost by rote. Mistakes of iconography that crept in by misunderstanding were irreversible. Many of the Bodhisattvas in the later manuscripts are unidentifiable, they have no attributes peculiar to themselves. Colours can be arbitrarily changed, even in the lovely manuscript dated in the 36th year of Rāmapāla (No.6) where the artist has adopted a colour scheme of blue throughout and sticks rigidly to it, despite the clear weight of tradition and evidence from other manuscripts that green is required.

Nonetheless, if we ignore the peculiarities of some of the miniatures depicting the scenes from the life of the Buddha, these tiny miniatures in the classic Pāla period of painting (Nos.5–9) are of a grace and beauty which belies the decline of the religion they serve, having arrived at a peak of classical perfection. The crudities of the earlier manuscripts have been ironed out. Only the bare essentials for iconographic comprehensibility are included now in the miniatures. The Bodhisattvas sit in graceful pose on lotus seats with often no background other than the halo which is their radiant emanation of light. Flaking of the paint reveals the beauty and sureness of the line, its superb expression of the mercy and compassion which is the essence of Bodhisattvahood.

The Pāla kingdom was reduced by rival Hindu dynasties to a small territory round Gayā by the reign of Govindapāla (commencing in 1161), and even this was destroyed soon afterwards. There are no illustrated Indian Buddhist manuscripts dated after this last reign, although there are some undated ones assigned to this period. The Buddhist monasteries and with them the traditions of Pāla painting were destroyed by the Turkish onslaught which swept across the north Indian plain after the Battle of Tarain in 1192. Of the rest of eastern India outside the Pāla dominions, only one illustrated manuscript has so far been published. Dated in the reign of Harivarman, one of a Vaishnava dynasty which ruled in south-eastern Bengal about 1100, it is a Buddhist manuscript of

the *Prajñāpāramitā* in one of its longest recensions. In a related style, but linked architecturally more to the Sena dominions of south-western Bengal, is a newly discovered manuscript of the *Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra* (No. 10) which even in an incomplete state is the most heavily illustrated manuscript to survive from this period. Both are in a simplified Pāla style, with neatly drawn figures, but eschewing any attempt at the sophisticated modelling practised under the Pālas. The *Kāraṇḍavyūha* is however remarkable for its being the only Buddhist manuscript of the period to attempt narrative illustration – a few of its miniatures actually represent the events described in the text.

In Nepal, the 12th century was a kind of plateau in her achievement in the art of manuscript illustration. The heights reached in the 1071 manuscript were not attained again, but a number of very fine manuscripts and covers survive from the period, including two on paper (No. 11). From the 13th century on, the best painters in Nepal must have found even the comparatively large paintings in the 1185 manuscript (No. 11) too cramping, and concentrated exclusively on large-scale paintings on cloth (*paṭa*), while manuscript illumination developed a rigidity that argues a dying art even in so fine a piece of painting as the Devī in No. 14. The technique here is brilliant, but the effect is cold; the pliancy and fluency of line and colouring in earlier Nepalese work has disappeared, leaving a hardness of line and a monotonous approach to colour modelling that is impressive in so tiny a compass but ultimately unsatisfying. Similar rigidity is to be observed in all later manuscript illustrations, but largely without compensatory brilliance. The collapse of the Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms of northern India after 1192 left Nepal isolated culturally as well as politically. Removed from the Indian states system, she continued in isolation for many centuries, and her manuscript traditions need not concern us again.

The much greater rarity of illustrated Jaina manuscripts on palm leaves does not permit us to indulge in any large-scale discussion of stylistic development. All these manuscripts were preserved in the Jaina *bhaṇḍārs* of Rajasthan and Gujarat, with the exception of a group from Moodabidri in Karnataka, and in the absence of evidence to the contrary we must assume that the manuscripts concerned were produced in these areas of western and southern India. The Jains in the 11th and 12th centuries were by no means unrepresented in other areas of India, and may have illustrated their manuscripts. But it is only where safe refuges could be provided in the underground *bhaṇḍārs* that any have survived, and it is to the latter that these manuscripts owe their survival.

We must first separate on grounds of style the painted wooden covers from the illustrated palm leaves. This we can easily do as there is in fact no connection between them. None of the surviving covers is now attached to a manuscript, illustrated or otherwise; none of the manuscripts with illustrations has a painted cover. This separation of the two seems to have been largely the case in eastern India also, where only one Pāla manuscript has survived with its original cover. Now the Jaina covers, of which the earliest appears to be late 11th century, are painted with a technical assurance that argues an already existing school of *paṭa*-painting. The style is somewhat more angular and linear than Pāla art at this time, but it is still capable of expressing considerable plasticity through modelling and indeed through the line itself. The narrative technique is fluent, as in the great Devasūri–Kumudachandra con-

frontation, with the different episodes of the story spaced out along both sides of the cover but interlocking.

The miniatures on the 12th-century palm leaves on the other hand are of much greater crudity, even though they use the same basic technique and artistic vocabulary, and this crudity is a constant factor throughout the manuscripts of this and the next century. In the 13th century, the basic vocabulary has practically disintegrated and it took another century to fashion a new one, as we see in the 1370 *Kalpasūtra* in the Ujjamphoi Dharmasāla Bhandār in Ahmadabad. Attempts at plasticity have disappeared, the linear technique has triumphed, but it is now one that also imposes fixed distortions and angularities. The further projecting eye, of which there are hints as early as the Ajantā and Ellora frescoes, occurs in the book-covers as well as the palm-leaf illustrations; in the former it co-exists happily with the generally plastic approach, in the latter it becomes part of the angularity and distortion. The free rendition of the human figure in the earlier work is impossible in the later, figures must stand, sit or lie in only the one position, their clothing disposed in only the one way. To compensate for these conformings to stereotypes, artists were allowed freedom of colouring and textile design which in the hands of the master who painted the Ujjamphoi *Kalpasūtra* afford it a grace and delicacy not achieved before. In this manuscript and the approximately contemporary Idar *Kalpasūtra* we can see that the narrative iconography of the *Kalpasūtra* is fixed and is the same as the Bombay paper manuscript of the same date, but we cannot as yet determine the source for it. This must have occurred in Gujarat during the course of the 14th century, doubtless at a centre like Pattan which could impose it on others. Although palm leaves continued to be illustrated in western India for another century, new developments occur only in the paper manuscripts.

1 'Vinayavastu' of the Mūlasarvāstivādins

The rules of monastic discipline in Sanskrit of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, one of the schools of Hīnayāna Buddhism, compiled about the 4th century AD. This school seems to have had its stronghold in Kashmir and Gandhara. Its *Vinaya* contains in addition to the usual monastic regulations a large number of illustrative stories (*avadānas*) and *sūtras* so that it forms one of the most important sources for the study of early Indian narrative literature. The discovery of almost the entire work at Gilgit in its Sanskrit original (being previously known only from its Tibetan and Chinese translations) was one of the greatest literary discoveries of this century.

The whole Ms., consisting apparently of some 423 almost perfectly preserved leaves of birch bark of great size (12 × 66 cm), superbly written in the Gupta characters of the 7th–8th century, was dug out of a collapsed *stūpa* at Gilgit in 1931. This is a Ms. of the finest quality, of austere grandeur. The birch bark is of good quality, smooth and of even colour, with attractive darker brown lenticels running across the leaf. Of decorative

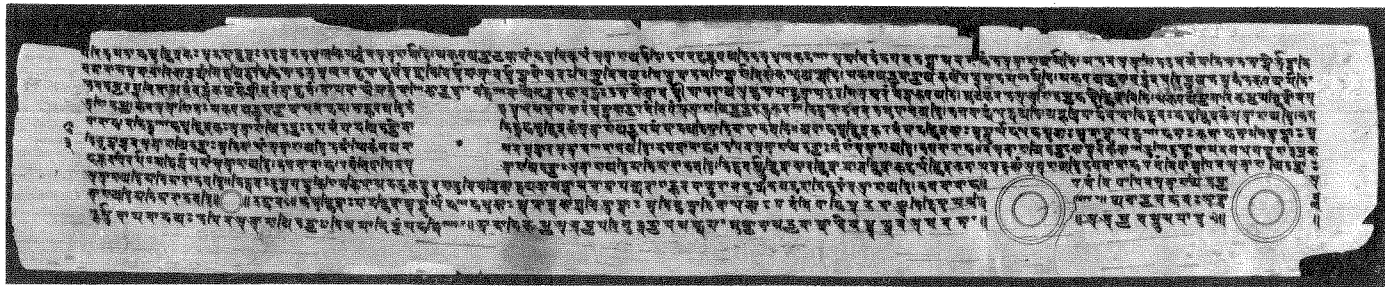
elements there are only large circles which mark the end of one of the major divisions of the *Vinaya* (as on f. 53a), and the smaller circles which mark off verse passages. The final folio contains three very large decorated circles, apparently *dharmacakras*, the Buddhist Wheel of the Law.¹ The folios are numbered on the recto, on the left. The stringhole is a third of the way along from the left, and sits in solitary splendour in a blank square, four lines deep. Its undamaged state suggests the whole Ms. was little used, as constant friction of the leaves over the cord would in course of time have produced considerable damage. It was doubtless a presentation Ms., given to the Buddhist monk whose relics were enshrined in the *stūpa* at Gilgit along with his library. The remainder of the Ms. is in the National Archives, New Delhi, and a private collection in Lahore.

British Library, London, Or. 11878A.

ff. 11 (numbered 43–53); 12 × 66 cm; birch bark; ten lines of north-western Gupta script; in glass.

Bibliography: Lévi 1932.

¹See reproduction in Vira and Chandra 1974.



1 f.53. Birch-bark folio, with roundels noting chapter ends.

2 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā'

Illustrated on p.25.

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Sections, one of the earliest works of Mahāyāna Buddhism, originating probably in the Andhra country of southern India about the 2nd century AD. The 32 chapters are of metaphysical speculation on the nature of Buddhahood, Bodhisattvahood, and of Wisdom. This is the earliest text of the Perfection of Wisdom cycle; in subsequent centuries it was both expanded (to 25,000 sections) and contracted (to a few brief verses).

This palm-leaf manuscript was copied in the fifth regnal year of the Pāla monarch Mahīpāla. The rest of the colophon is much rubbed, but the Ms. was commissioned by one Lādākā (?), the daughter of Bahubhūti. The Ms. originally had six illustrated folios, with three paintings on each, of which only five have survived, the opening leaf being a later replacement without illustration. The covers are slightly larger, with interior paintings, and are replacements of 12th-century date from Nepal.

The date of this Ms. is controversial, owing to the colophon's not stating which of the two Pāla monarchs named Mahīpāla is meant; the fifth year of either being equivalent to c.1000 or 1080. Bendall in his Catalogue is inclined to identify the difficult to read Lādākā, the donor of this Ms., with the Queen Uḍḍākā, who is the donor of No.4, which is firmly dated in the 14th year of Nayapāla, c.1057, where she is described as *paramopāsikārājñī*, the 'devoutly Buddhist Queen'. If she is the same woman, then her description as Bahubhūti's daughter necessarily must precede chronologically her description as Nayapāla's queen, so that there can be no question of her donating a Ms. in the reign of Mahīpāla II which occurred after the reign of Nayapāla. Stylistically this fits very well, for reasons advanced above, on the comparative crudeness of these miniatures. Early features include details such as the single halo only, the possibility that the figures sit are the prototype of the large body haloes of later Pāla painting, and the

absence of the characteristic Pāla dip in the upper eyelid (a universal feature of the Rāmapāla-period manuscripts) and of other late features such as moving throne-backs and cushions.

The painted covers are both slightly larger and were made for some other manuscript in Nepal in the 12th century. They are extremely beautiful, with wonderfully-fluent figure modelling; on one is the Buddha and attendant Bodhisattvas, on the other Prajñāpāramitā with attendants.

University Library, Cambridge, Add.1464.

ff.227; 5 × 53.5cm; talipot leaves; *Kuṭila* script, six lines; 15 miniatures, 5 × 4.5cm; wooden boards, 5.5 × 54cm.

Bibliography: CUL 1883 pp.100-1, and pl.II, 1. Saraswati, 1977, figs. 261-3 in colour.

3 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā'

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Sections (see No.2).

This manuscript was copied by one Sujātabhadra in the Nepalese year 135/1015 in the ancient and famous monastery of Śrī Hlam, the whereabouts of which is not known to us, in the joint reigns of Bhojadeva, Rudradeva and Lakshmīkāmadeva (the Nepalese king of-ten adopted the system of joint reigns with sons and other relatives). It is written in a transitional *Kuṭila* script, in which the angle at the bottom of the vertical strokes is scarcely noticeable. Another hand, that of Karunavajra, added a second colophon in 259/1139, stating that the *Prajñāpāramitā* was rescued by him when fallen into the hands of unbelievers. This note is in the hooked Nepalese script or *Bhujmoli*, one of its earliest attestations. A third hand, probably the original scribe, has added notes in a more cursive script, almost a *Bhujmoli* underneath most of the 85 paintings in the manuscript, informing us of the name of the divinity and the whereabouts of the shrine containing this particular image. Similar inscriptions occur in the manuscript of the same text dated 191/1071 in Calcutta, and these two documents are unique in their importance

in this respect for their evidence of iconography and the main shrines of Vajrayāna worship. Foucher has noted that the first 26 of the inscriptions all end with the phrase—*āriṣasthāna*, i.e. *āle-khyasthāna*, the scribe's note to the illuminator to insert a miniature here of the deity so indicated, and that the appropriate chapter end is likewise indicated. In the later miniatures he simply wrote the name of the deity involved, the purpose by then being obvious. The miniatures were obviously added after the text was written, as the paint occasionally goes over the edges of letters. There is however no good reason to doubt that these miniatures are contemporary with the original date of the colophon, although doubts have recently been expressed on the grounds of the painting's comparative crudity and resemblance to certain manuscripts of the 13th and 14th centuries.¹ However, the possibility of their being so late is excluded, as Foucher pointed out, by the writer of the second colophon in 1139 actually writing over the paint of some of the miniatures on the last page. The substance of the text of the inscriptions at the beginning of the Ms. is a sufficient indication that they were instructions to a painter, either from the scribe or someone competent to choose an iconographic scheme for the Ms. Nor need this very early attestation of the *Bhujmoli* script in the inscriptions deter us from accepting this date of 1015 for the paintings. Bendall's earliest Ms. in this script is dated 1165; the second colophon of the 1015 Ms. in *Bhujmoli* is dated 1139. Earlier examples still are found in the *Pañcarakṣā* dated in the 53rd year of Rāmapāla (c.1135)² and of course the inscriptions under the paintings of the 1071 Ms. in Calcutta, whose date no one doubts, are in a hand similar to the 1015 Ms. in Cambridge.

The 85 paintings of the latter Ms. occur at chapter ends and at the beginning of the entire Ms. The first chapter is an exception, with five single paintings occurring at various intervals throughout—the original first folio is missing so it is not known how many paintings it would have had, although we may guess at three. The ends of the chapters are marked by two paint-

ings on the same folio, until the end of the 12th chapter, which is marked by three. Two pictures then mark the end of each chapter (apart from chapter 14 which has three) until the 31st chapter, four folios of which have two paintings each. The end of the 32nd chapter and of the work proper (f.222a) has three paintings. The next and final folio (f.223) carries on the recto the colophon and the extra colophon inserted in 1139, and on the verso a short text in the same hand as the main manuscript entitled *Vajradhvajaparīṇāma* on the virtues of reading the *Prajñāpāramitā*. This leaf has three paintings on the recto and no less than five on the verso. No Pāla Ms. adopts this arrangement of the miniatures, which again argues for experimentation in this manuscript. The 1071 Ms. from Nepal has simply a single miniature at chapter ends, and three to end the work.

As for the subjects of these paintings, they are in general different from their Indian Pāla counterparts. Apart from the last eight on the colophon folio, which are of the eight great scenes from the life of the Buddha, they are all of specific iconographic representations of the Buddha or Bodhisattvas or other divinities, or of important *stūpas* or *caityas*. The majority of places designated are in eastern India, but there are some from far off places—China, Java, Ceylon, Gujarat, southern India. The specific locations extend even to different temple types or caverns around and over the divinities.³ It need not be assumed that the painter was personally familiar with the specific appearance of these temples. Rather he was copying from earlier materials, either another manuscript, as Foucher believed, or larger-scale wall paintings or *paṭas*. The covers are later additions of the 12th century, with fine paintings of the *Pāramitās*⁴ spread over the two interior covers.

University Library, Cambridge, Add.1643.

ff.223; 5.25 × 54cm; talipot leaves (first folio a paper replacement); six lines of transitional *Kuṭila* in three columns, with stringholes in the central margins, which on the illustrated leaves and some others have large *vajras* painted on them; 85 paintings (out of 88?), about 5.25 × 6cm; wooden covers, later additions, with *pūjā* marks on outside, and painted interiors, 5.4 × 54.5 and 6 × 56cm.

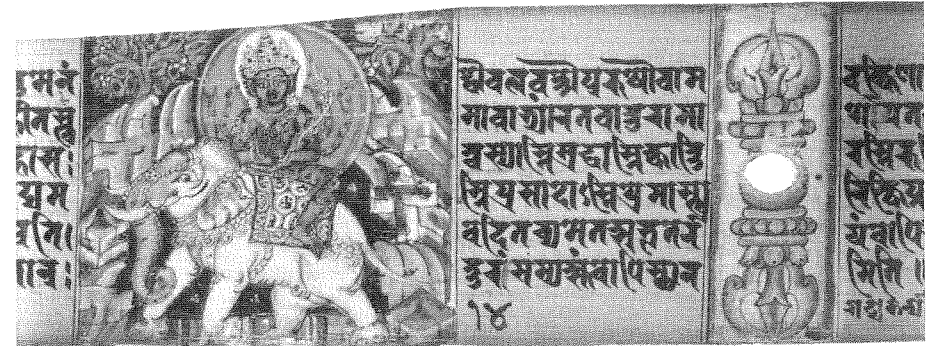
Bibliography: CUL 1883, pp.151-2. Foucher 1900. Saraswati 1977 (with numerous col. repros. of Add.1643).

¹Pal 1978, p.34.

²Banerjee 1969.

³Saraswati 1975 discusses them.

⁴The cover published by Pal (1978, fig.16) as belonging to this Ms. actually belongs to Add.1464 (No.2). One of the *Pāramitās* is reproduced in Foucher 1900 pl.IX, 4.



3 f.127a (detail). The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, and the marginal decoration of a *vajra* (thunderbolt).

4 'Pañcarakṣā'

Illustrated on p.27.

Five hymns addressed to five Buddhist protective goddesses.

These hymns are among the most ancient of Buddhist *dhāraṇīs* or hymns, fragments of the text having been found in Central Asian Mss. of the early first millennium AD. The goddesses addressed are protective—thus hymned, they ward off evils. The text was extremely popular in Nepal from at least the 10th century, as numerous manuscripts of it have survived, many of them illuminated. It appears to have been used at least in more modern times as a sacred book on which oaths could be sworn. This Ms. of these hymns was copied in the 14th year of King Nayapāla of the Pāla dynasty, on the orders of Queen Uḍḍākā (see No.2), in a fine *Kuṭila* hand. The date is equivalent to c.1057. There are 36 miniatures in an elaborate iconographic scheme that is at present somewhat obscure. *Pañcarakṣā* Mss. are usually illustrated by paintings of the five goddesses, with or without their equivalent Jinas. Here this pattern is not adhered to. Pratisarā is accompanied by five of the Mortal Buddhas (ff.1b, 2a); Mayūrī by the remaining two Mortal Buddhas, Maitreya, Vajrapāni and Tārā (ff.19b, 20a); Sāhasrapramardani by four Bodhisattvas and a *stūpa* being worshipped by two figures (ff.45b, 46a); Sītavatī by Manjushrī, Padmapāni and three other goddesses (ff.64b, 65a); and Mantrānusārāni by five demonic figures of yoginīs (ff.66b, 67a). The final group round the end of the text (ff.69b, 70a) is the same five terrifying yoginīs around the last of the Mortal Buddhas, Maitreya.

All the figure drawing in this Ms. is of great simplicity and elegance. The artist of these paintings experimented with gilding the flesh of all these figures, none too successfully as little of it remains. However, its presence on this early manuscript demonstrates that gilding on paper manuscripts need not necessarily be taken as a late feature as has sometimes been claimed. Most of the figures have both

head and body haloes, a development since the Mahīpāla I Ms. (No.2), but none of them is seated on a throne with vertical throne-back as is found in later manuscripts. Some have large cushions behind them, and others triangular projections above their shoulders which are a feature of the Bodleian manuscript dated c.1100 (No.5). These must be rudimentary versions of the backs of thrones found in later Pāla manuscripts, but their curious shapes which change direction haphazardly suggest that the artists are copying from a prototype whose precise language they no longer comprehend.

University Library, Cambridge, Add.1688.

ff.70; 5.2 × 56cm; talipot leaves; *Kuṭila* script, five lines; 36 miniatures, 5.2 × 5.6cm; lotus designs at end of chapters; plain wooden boards.

Bibliography: CUL 1883, p.175. Saraswati 1977, col. figs.203-6, 259-60.

5 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā'

COLOUR PLATE IV

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Sections (see No.2).

The Pāla empire was in decline from the middle of the 9th century, but under monarchs like Mahīpāla (c.995-1043) was able to check and even counteract this tendency. Rāmapāla (c.1082-1130) was another such monarch, about whom we know far more than most other medieval Indian kings, as he is the subject of a contemporary political biography (*Rāmacarita* by Sandhyākaranandī). He came to the throne after his father (Mahīpāla II) had perished in a rebellion, and the imperial hold on Bihar and Bengal was very shaky, but he succeeded in countervailing the fissiparous tendencies of the Pāla dominions and exerting strong central rule for most of his long reign. And it was during his reign that Pāla painting seems to have reached its peak of classical perfection—three extremely fine manuscripts have survived, as well as several others.

The Bodleian Ms. is dated in the year 15 of Rāmapāla (c.1097) and was copied at the famous monastery-university of Nālandā by the scribe Ahunakunda Bhattāraka. It is illustrated with 18 paintings and has painted covers as well, most of it being in superb condition. It has the usual cycle of 18 miniatures in three sets of six each, the middle one marking the end of the 12th chapter. The eight scenes from the life of the Buddha are symmetrically disposed for once, being the outer pairs of the first and last sets, although they are not here, nor anywhere else, in their natural order. There are three extra miniatures of the Buddha and the remaining ones are of Prajñāpāramitā and the Bodhisattvas.

The style of this manuscript is not reflected in the two other known manuscripts from Nālandā (the Calcutta Ms. dated in the year 5 of Mahīpāla and the Royal Asiatic Society's Ms. in the year 4 of Govindapāla, No.9). The line is superb, especially in the drawing of the Bodhisattvas of the central pair of illustrated leaves; the outline of their faces and of the Buddha in three-quarter profile with the curve towards the lower part of the face is unique in Pāla painting. Of especial interest also is the triangular shape of the throne-backs visible over the shoulders, which slopes and tilts with the figures. This is found in more pronounced form in the contemporary Bengal Mss. (see No.10). Absent are the elaborate throne-backs and cushions of the standing Buddha.

The covers have been published as Pāla¹ but are in fact superb specimens of Nepalese painting of the 12th century. On one, the more damaged, the temptation of the Buddha forms the centre-piece for the other scenes from his life; on the other is Prajñāpāramitā with the nine other Pāramitās and Varendra Tārā surrounding her², a theme that is apparently found also on the covers of No.3.

Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Sansk. a.7. Provenance: Hoernle Collection.

ff.188; 6.1 × 55.7cm; talipot leaves; text in fine *Kuṭila* hand in six lines in three columns (15, 17, and 15 cm wide); 18 miniatures, about 6 × 6cm; illuminated folios have margins decorated in arabesque and geometric designs; wooden covers 6.1 × 55.5cm, with painted interiors.

Bibliography: Bod 1905, p.250. Conze 1948. Mallmann 1965.

¹Barrett and Gray, 1963, pp.52–3 (col. repro.).

²Identified by Mallmann 1965.

6 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā'

COLOUR PLATE I

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Sections (see No.2).

This famous manuscript is perhaps the most classically perfect of the great manuscripts associated with the name of Rāmapāla¹. It was copied at a place unspecified in the 36th year of his reign, c.1118, at the expense of one Udayasimha for the benefit of his parents' souls. Only the illustrated pages plus one other survive from the whole Ms. which originally had 179 folios, and was illustrated with a cycle of 18 miniatures, at beginning, middle (beginning of chapter 12) and end. Unlike all the other similar cycles, it lacks an image of Prajñāpāramitā herself, and also any of the scenes of the life of the Buddha, who is represented only by the red-coloured Amitābha Buddha, and Vajrasattva. It is the images of the Bodhisattvas which are the especial glory of this manuscript, nine of them in all, drawn with a perfectly controlled line fully expressive of volume, so that even where the paint has flaked on the yellow and white Bodhisattvas the figures still seem fully modelled.

Not the least remarkable aspect of these miniatures is the uniform colour scheme which is preserved throughout the Ms. The images are, apart from the red Amitābha, all yellow, white or different shades of slate-blue, which is used as a substitute for green on the images of Samantabhadra, Ratnapāni, Vajrapāni, Shyāmātārā and Parnashabarī. The large body haloes are all red, while the ground beyond is very dark slate-blue. Apart from the occasional pink head halo, all other details of dress, throne-backs, cushions, lotuses and so on conform to this basic scheme of white, yellow, red and slate-blue. Even more remarkably, the square *maṇḍala* in which sits Vajrasattva, in the middle position of f.89b, is divided by diagonals into four triangles, each of which is coloured in one of these basic colours. There can be no doubt that this is deliberate, that the artist was deliberately restricting his colour range, and indeed colouring his subjects in accordance with his scheme rather than with iconographical demands.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, I.S.4–10, 1958.

Provenance: Vredenburg Collection.

ff.7 (numbered 1, 2, 89, 90, 178, 179 and one without illustration apparently unnumbered); 6.2 × 54cm (ends slightly broken, and some pieces missing from upper and lower edges); talipot leaves; six lines of *Kuṭila*, with marked twist to the bottom, in three columns, 14, 17 and 14cm wide; four margins on each folio; the illustrated pages have margins decorated with foliate and geometric designs in yellow and white and touches of colour, and with red borders; 18 miniatures, 6–6.2 × 7–8.2cm, including their red bor-

ders; no covers; now mounted under glass and framed.

Bibliography: Vredenburg 1927 (col. repro. of nine miniatures). AB No.45 (col. repro.).

¹The colophon of this one seems incomplete, as Rāmapāla does not have his full imperial titles, and indeed one of them, *mahārājādhi*, breaks off in the middle of a word and carries on without interruption into the king's name *Śrīmadrāmapālasya* etc.

7 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā'

COLOUR PLATE III

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Sections (see No.2).

This Ms. is on 337 palm leaves, and was copied in the 15th year of Gopāladeva at the monastery of Vikramashīla. This great monastic-university establishment was founded by Dharmapāla (c.781–821) to teach the *Prajñāpāramitā* doctrine, and was destroyed along with the other Buddhist monasteries at the end of the 12th century. Its site has recently been discovered at Antichak east of Bhagalpur in Bihar.

The precise king named in the colophon is a matter of some controversy, as there were three kings named Gopāla in the dynasty, but it is now becoming clearer that it must be the third of that name, whose reign began c.1130. The Ms. is illustrated with six miniatures, arranged in facing pairs at the beginning, middle (beginning of the 12th chapter) and end of the work. All but one of these divinities are seated within a shrine under a trefoil or cinquefoil arch surmounted by three diminishing horizontal courses in pyramidal form surmounted by an *amalaka* and supported by pillars with vase bases, representing the cella of a Pāla shrine. The details are picked out minutely in red, blue, green and yellow.

One other illustrated Ms. is known from the reign of Gopāla III, dated in his 4th year (c.1134), with 18 miniatures, and now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.¹ The divinities are similarly located under shrines, although not elaborately decorated. This is the only Pāla Ms. which has survived with its original decorated covers, and on these the architecture is as detailed as on Or.6902.

British Library, London, Or.6902.

ff.337; 6.8 × 41cm; talipot leaves; six lines of fine *Kuṭila* script in three columns 11.5cm wide; four margins on each side, 2cm wide, decorated with arabesque and geometrical designs; six miniatures approx. 6.8 × 6.5–7.00cm; two stringholes in inner margins, 13.5cm from edge; wooden binding boards, undecorated, covered with *pūjā* marks.

Bibliography: AB, p.39 [the present author has revised his views on the dating

of this Ms. to c.970 as presented there]. JRAS 1910, pp.150–1.

¹No.20.589, published Bulletin BMFA, LXIII, 1965.

8 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā'

Illustrated on p.20.

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Sections (see No.2).

This undated manuscript is the most heavily illustrated surviving Pāla manuscript, with 69 miniatures. It has lost a few folios, and would originally have had 78 miniatures. The disposition of the miniatures is complex, combining the normal cycle of 18 miniatures, which consists of six paintings each at the beginning and end of the work and another six at the beginning of chapter 12 (ff.149b/150a), with another cycle which consists of a pair of miniatures on facing folios at the beginning of each of the 32 chapters not illuminated in the first cycle, i.e. all the chapters apart from Nos.1 and 12. It is not yet clear whether the precise iconographic scheme is to be interpreted as a single enormous *maṇḍala*, or if not, what are the reasons for the choice of divinities in their coupling and relative positions within the framework of the overall scheme. It begins with the five Jinas around Prajñāpāramitā, followed by the *Jinaśaktis*, and then a sequence of important Bodhisattvas and four of the Mortal Buddhas. The six paintings at the beginning of chapter 12 are of six of the eight great events from the life of the Buddha, the remaining two beginning chapter 25. Between these two points, the subjects of the miniatures are mostly the terrifying divinities of the northern Buddhist pantheon, with some more Bodhisattvas, resulting in some apparently very odd couplings—Marīcī with Lokanātha, Dīpankara Buddha with Samvara etc. The final group from chapter 26 on is of mostly beneficent deities again, with the remaining three Mortal Buddhas. The last surviving miniatures beginning chapter 32 are of Vajrasattva and Vajradhātviśvarī; they would have been followed by six miniatures at the end of the chapter concluding the whole cycle, but these last two folios are missing.

There are two styles represented in the miniatures of this Ms. One is an angular, linear style in which the scenes from the life of the Buddha are painted, with flat colour planes and hardly any modelling. The Buddha, when standing, carries his throne-back and cushion around with him. The other style is somewhat more modelled, and there are some lovely Bodhisattvas painted in pink, green and dark blue, fully modelled, but still with rather angular features and pointed chins. Even these are not so fully modelled as the figures in the Rāmapāla Ms. of c.1118



9 f.101b (detail). The Buddha descends from the 33rd Heaven accompanied by Brahmā and Indra, one of the eight episodes from his life.

(No.6) or the Govindapāla Ms. of 1165 (No.9), both from Nālandā. It could of course be later than this last Ms. but since no Mss. of comparable size or beauty are known from this period, between the collapse of the Pālas and the destruction of the Buddhist monasteries, it seems safer to date it to the late Pāla period in the middle of the 12th century, from a monastery other than Nālandā or Vikramashīla (No.7.).

British Library, London, Or.12461.

ff.325 (five folios missing, numbered originally 29, 104, 105, 324, 325); 6.2 × 39cm; talipot leaves (ff.321–4 are yellow paper replacement leaves in an 18th-century Nepalese hand—they have the text from the end of chapter 31 to the finish); six lines of *Kuṭila* script in an elegant hand in three columns; text area 4 × 34.5cm; 69 miniatures, mostly 6.2 × 4.5–6.5cm; pages with miniatures are decorated with geometric and arabesque designs mostly in red and yellow in the four margins, while the end of each chapter in the text area is usually marked with a small coloured animal or design—a peacock, deer, elephant, hare, rabbit etc. of singular charm; stringholes in both inner margins, 12cm from edge; undecorated bevelled wooden boards 6.6 × 39.8cm with red interiors, and copious *pūjā* marks on upper cover; brass lotuses were added in Nepal in the 18th century to cover the holes of the lower cover—these would have had spikes attached to secure the leaves.

Bibliography: AB No.46. Lewis 1959–60.

9 'Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā'

The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Sections (see No.2).

This Ms. marks practically the end of the Pāla tradition of manuscript illustration. It is dated in the 4th year of Govindapāla, whose reign commenced in 1161 and hence is equivalent to 1165. There is no epigraphic evidence linking this ruler to the main line of the Pāla kings, the last of whom is usually thought to be Madanapāla (1143–61) and under whom most of the empire was annexed by neighbouring Hindu kingdoms. It is not even certain that Govindapāla's reign began when Madanapāla's ended, but since the former assumes the full imperial titles of the Pālas and is regarded in all Buddhist Ms. colophons up to 1199 as the legitimate Buddhist king, it seems logical to assume that he was the legitimate successor of Madanapāla. Govindapāla's rule, however, was confined to the area around Gayā and Nālandā in Bihar. Even this limited power collapsed early in his reign, for all the records in his reign apart from this, the first one, speak of his 'vanished' or 'destroyed' reign.

The colophon is now somewhat damaged and almost illegible, but after the date comes a mention of the monastery of Nālandā, which in such a position can only mean that it was copied there. It has 15 illustrations, the original opening folio being missing along with its three miniatures, in the standard cycle of 18. The style is a continuation of the Rāmapāla style and is still at a high level of sensitivity in line and modelling, although exhibiting the standard conventions of the standing and lying Buddha with throne-backs and cushions.

Royal Asiatic Society, London, Hodgson Ms. 1.

ff. 204; 6.25 × 57cm; talipot leaves; six lines of transitional *Nāgarī* script, in three columns; 15 miniatures; all four margins on illuminated leaves are decorated, stringholes in both inner margins; Nepalese covers with interiors painted with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, 12th century, 6.6 × 57.5cm.

Bibliography: RAS 1876.

10 'Kāraṇḍavyūhasūtra'

A comparatively late Buddhist *sūtra* in Sanskrit, concerned to exalt the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara through recounting his compassionate journeys to the underworld, Ceylon, etc. The Ms. is incomplete, having only 53 surviving leaves from a putative 70, but is the most heavily illustrated surviving Buddhist Ms. from India. All 53 leaves have a miniature in the centre of each side, while all four margins on each side also bear little vignettes of the Buddhas, worshippers, etc., under *caityas*. The outer margins have however mostly been broken away. The miniatures are in a fluent, almost purely linear style, that is different from the known styles associated with the Pālas or with Nepal, and closely related to the only known illustrated Buddhist Ms. from eastern India done outside the Pāla empire, i.e. the Ms. of the 25000 *Prajñāpāramitā* with 22 miniatures in the Baroda Museum dated in the eighth year of Harivarman, c. 1100.¹ The Varmans were a Hindu Vaishnava dynasty who ruled over south-eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) between about 1080 and

1150, and appear both to have tolerated and indeed patronized Buddhism.

In both Mss. the neatly drawn figures are usually under trefoil arches below pyramidal roofs with horizontal courses, with crowning *amalaka*, as in the Vikramashila Ms. (No. 7), but in a much more simplified style, while two stylized trees protrude above the top of the temple structure. But whereas the Harivarman Ms. has wide-opened eyes on all its faces, the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* has the characteristic Pāla dip in the upper eyelid, suggesting a provenance nearer the Pāla empire than the extreme edge of Bengal. A further clue is provided by the unusual type of temple architecture seen in a few of the miniatures, which instead of the types analysed by Saraswati² in other manuscript illustrations of the period, is in fact a *śikhara* or *deul* type of temple consisting of a single tower with vertical sides, and a top curving into a crowning *amalaka*. This is not an architectural type seen in any other Buddhist Ms. It is exemplified by the surviving temples of Orissa in particular, but it was also fairly common in the Bankura District of West Bengal bordering on Orissa.³ It is not axiomatic in these Mss. that such features are necessarily based on local architectural types—both the 11th-century illustrated Nepalese Mss. (No. 3) bear labels to all their illustrations giving the whereabouts of the particular image, but it is doubtful whether the different architectural types thus represented in fact conform to reality. However this Ms. is in a different position; there is no attempt to suggest that the images of Avalokiteshvara and the other divinities are localized anywhere in

particular, so it is probable that any architectural oddities represent actual conditions. Stylistically the Ms. may be dated to the first half of the 11th century, when the Bankura area along with all south-western Bengal was under the control of the Hindu Sena dynasty.

British Library, London, Or. 13940.

ff. 53; much damaged at edges, maximum 5.5 × 36cm (originally about 5.5 × 39cm); talipot leaves; six lines of early *Nāgarī* in four columns, text area 3.5 × 35cm; 106 miniatures, each in centre of page, measuring 5 × 4.75cm (all damaged at top and bottom); both inner and outer margins of each page decorated with vignettes, the outer ones mostly broken off; stringholes in both inner margins..

Bibliography: Unpublished.

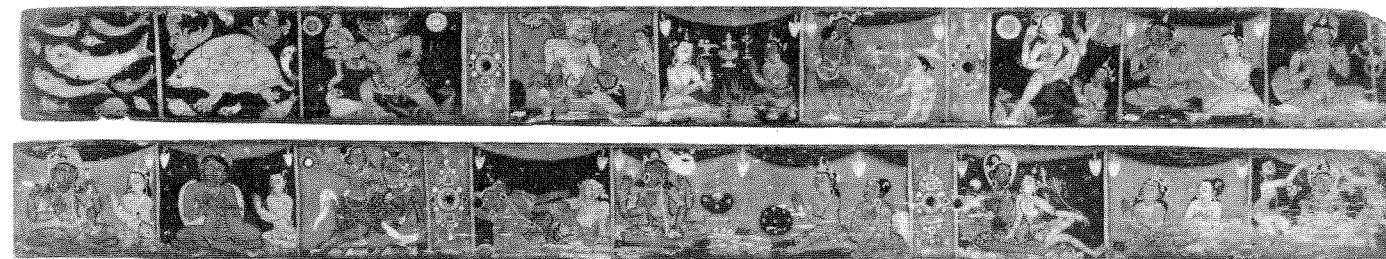
¹Bhattacharya 1944. ²Saraswati 1976.

³Saraswati 1975.

11 'Vasudhārādhāraṇī' and 'Nāmasaṅgīti'

COLOUR PLATE VI

Two hymns in Sanskrit to the Buddhist goddess of wealth, Vasudhārā, and to the Buddha, in a pair of linked manuscripts. They are both on stout Nepalese paper, dyed blue-black, and written in alternate lines of gold and silver ink. This type of Ms. is fairly common in Nepal from the 16th century onwards, but it is now becoming clear that there is a small group of much earlier manuscripts in this style—a Ms. of the *Prajñāpāramitā* in the British Library, datable palaeographically to the 12th century,¹ another, in the National Archives, Kathmandu, with an apparent date of 1225², and one in the Heeramanek



13 Inner covers. The avatars of Vishnu.

Collection in Los Angeles c. 1250,³ which scholars have been reluctant to accept in the absence of corroborating evidence as to the antiquity of papermaking in Nepal. However, the Ms. of the *Vasudhārādhāraṇī* contains miniatures of superb quality which are unquestionably of 12th-century date, as well as a secure colophon dated in year 305 of the Nepal era (c. 1185), in the reign of Someshvaradeva (reg. c. AD 1180–5). Palaeographically the Ms. is in a securely 12th-century hand, and it is the earliest known dated example of such blue-black paper. An even earlier Ms. dated 1105 on normal Nepalese yellow paper is in the Asutosh Museum in Calcutta.⁴

The Ms. has two miniatures at the beginning on facing folios, of the Buddha seated on a lion-throne with attendant Bodhisattvas, and of the six-armed form of Vasudhārā seated similarly with two near-naked urchins above pouring out bags of money. Both display naturalistic modelling and a plastic use of colour of the greatest sensitivity. The companion text, *Nāmasaṅgīti*, is in the same calligraphic hand, and has four miniatures of slightly less refinement by a different hand.

British Library, London, Or. 13971 A and B.

ff. 21 and 28; 9.1 × 26cm, and 8.9 × 26cm; blue-black paper; five lines of *Kuṭīla* script in alternate silver and gold ink; stringhole offset to left 10cm from edge; A has two paintings 9.1 × 9cm on right side of page, with decorated squares around stringholes on these pages; B four miniatures 8.9 × c. 9cm; unbound.

Bibliography: BL 1980–81.

¹BM 1902, Or. 2202.

²Trier 1972, fig. 118.

³Pal 1978, plate 27.

⁴Mookerjee 1947.

12 Manuscript cover

COLOUR PLATE V

A single wooden cover to a palm-leaf Ms, with painted inner surface representing the story of the *Vessantara Jātaka*. One of the most famous of the early Buddhist birth-stories, which recount the lives of the *Bodhisattva* (Buddha-to-be) led in his former existences, probably dating from

the 5th century BC, they are part of the literary heritage of southern Buddhism. A version of this famous story however survived in the Mahāyāna tradition, under the title of *Viśvambhara Jātaka*, included in several of the Sanskrit collections of *avadānas* and *jātakas*. The story concerns the Bodhisattva's incarnation as Prince Vishvambhara, who embodied the virtue of charity, and whose disinterestedness is tested by the gods to such an extent that he gives away his goods, his house, his kingdom, and eventually his wife and children.

This is an extremely rare example of narrative technique used on the cover of a manuscript. If the divinities painted in the Pāla and Nepalese Mss. are to be regarded as scaled-down versions of icons as wall paintings, it would follow that this cover is a version of a full-size fresco of this subject, and indeed with its fluid transitions from one episode to the next it recalls the narrative technique employed in large-scale wall paintings as in Ajantā. It is datable to c. 1100, from Nepal.

National Museum, New Delhi, 51.212.

Wooden cover, bevelled top; 5.6 × 32.8cm; plain top, painted interior.

Bibliography: ICMAA p. 114 and cited references.

13 Pair of manuscript covers

A pair of covers illustrated with the incarnations of Vishnu.

This pair of Nepalese covers must once have enclosed a Hindu manuscript; they are datable to the 12th century.

The upper cover is divided into three groups of three panels divided by the stringholes with their decorated margins, representing the Fish, Tortoise, Boar; Man-lion, Bali at the sacrificial fire, Bali and Vāmana; Vishnu Trivikrama, Parashurāma and devotees, and Rāma. The lower cover has eight panels, showing a four-armed blue Krishna with devotee, Buddha with devotee, Kalki on a green horse, then a panel which probably represents Vishnu lying asleep on Ananta (*Anantaśayana*), but in which the god appears to have three heads and a male attendant rather than Lakshmi; the next is

a double-width panel, showing Vishnu being worshipped by two devotees. After the second stringhole, the last three panels show Vishnu with Lakshmi on his lap, a pair of devotees and apparently the consecration of a king. The background colour alternates between blue and red, and many panels have the curtain roll and hanging tassels usual in Nepalese painting at this period.

This interesting pair shows considerable iconographic freedom in the depiction of the avatars, including charming representations of the Fish and Tortoise avatars as precisely that, without any human attributes at all. Particular attention is shown to the Dwarf incarnation (Vāmana) which has three panels devoted to this theme. It is noticeable in fact that the iconography of the avatars is closest to the norm when the subject had already been depicted in stone in Nepal—Varāha, Narasimha, Vāmana and Trivikrama,¹ while the other avatars after the first two animal ones are often no more than conventional Bodhisattva representations. It would seem therefore that the covers were painted by a Buddhist monk, none too familiar with the correct representations of some of the avatars of which he would have seen no sculptural representations.

British Museum, London, 1965, 6-14, 2.

Two wooden covers, bevelled tops; 4.6 × 56cm; plain outsides, painted interiors; stringholes match only if one cover is reversed.

Bibliography: Pal 1978, pp. 55–7, fig. 51.

¹Pal 1974, figs. 1–3, 92–3, 95–7. The famous Vishnu Anantashayana of AD 642 at Budhanilkanth (fig. 12) does not have an attendant Lakshmi, so hence perhaps our artist's confusion on this score, but he is apparently confusing Vishnu with the four-headed Brahmā who is meant to be sitting on the lotus growing from Vishnu's navel in the standard iconography of this scene.

14 'Devīmāhātmya'

COLOUR PLATE II

The *Devīmāhātmya* (Glorification of the Goddess) is a lengthy hymn from the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, in which the Devī, the Goddess, is worshipped as the supreme principle of the universe, and an account given of her origin, of her superiority to all other gods, and of her victories



10 ff. 49b, 43b (details). The goddess Parnashabarī in an Orissan type of temple, and the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara as Simhanāda, mounted on a lion.



15 Eight of the 16 Jaina *Vidyādevīs*, with royal devotees on right.

over demons who tyrannize the world, in particular, her victory over Mahīśāsura the Buffalo-demon.

Three palm leaves, each with a painting of the Goddess slaying the Buffalo-demon to the left of the central hole, are all that is left of this manuscript. The second of the two leaves in their present arrangement has a male and female devotee on the right of the hole. There is no text, other than a damaged inscription in Sanskrit in Nepalese *Bhujmoli* script of the 13/14th century on the reverse of the third leaf, which appears to record details of the drawing of the miniatures, but which has so far eluded precise decipherment. The precise function of these leaves is puzzling. They may be fragments of a manuscript of the *Devīmāhātmya*. They may possibly be an artist's preparatory studies for a larger painting on cloth or on a wall, but in this case their format remains puzzling, as there is no obvious reason for painting such studies on palm leaves when cloth and paper were both available, and the shape of the leaf prevented its full utilization. But there can be no doubt of the provenance of these leaves, which is Nepal, of the 13th century. The subject is identical in all three paintings, save that the Goddess's colour is respectively blue, green and red. With one foot firmly planted on her lion vehicle, and the other on the back of the decapitated demonic buffalo, she stands serenely holding the weapons given her by the gods, while lassoing with her snakes the demons Chanda and Munda.¹

British Library, London, Or.13860.

ff.3; 4.9 × 18.4cm; talipot leaves; no text on verso, two lines of *Bhujmoli* script on reverse of f.3; three miniatures, 4.9 × 8.8cm, with extension on f.2a; central stringhole.

Bibliography: Unpublished.

¹See Pal 1974, fig.278, for an almost contemporary version in stone, and Pal 1975, fig.73, for a 16th-century bronze realization of the same subject.

15 Manuscript cover

A wooden cover (*paṭlī*) of a palm-leaf Ms. with on the inner surface representations of eight *Vidyādevīs*, and two female devotees.

The *Vidyādevīs*, goddesses of wisdom, of whom there are 16 in the Jaina tradition, seem to be related to both the Buddhist *Prajñāpāramitās* and the Hindu concep-

tion of the mother-goddesses. This is one of a pair of covers, the other being badly damaged, showing the 16 *Vidyādevīs*, together with a pair of female devotees—one labelled Devaśrī Śrāvika, the other Padminī, the implication of the former title being that the lady is a royal devotee.

The rendering of the *Vidyādevīs* seems to be partly dependent on influences from the Pāla Buddhist manuscripts, in their frontal viewpoint, in the attributes which they carry and the arches under which they sit, which are unique in Jaina painting at this period. The artist was none too clear about whether these arches were in fact arches, throne-backs or haloes, as they tilt about depending on the inclination of the *devīs'* head. If these are dependent on Pāla models, then it is impossible to date them before the second quarter of the 12th century, to which time the two royal ladies would seem to belong. They differ markedly from the set of *Vidyādevīs* published by Moti Chandra¹ in a Ms. dated 1161, in which none of these Pāla characteristics is apparent.

The outside of the cover is decorated with a charming creeper design, issuing on two sides from the mouth of a *kirtti-mukha* in the centre of the board, with elephants and strange beasts depicted in the loops of the creeper. This is one of several such decorations known from this period.²

Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute, Ahmadabad.

Provenance: Jaina *bhaṇḍār*, Jaiselmer.

Wooden cover, with bevelled edges; 7.5 × 58cm; two stringholes; both sides decorated.

Bibliography: Punyavijaya and Shah 1966.

¹Moti Chandra 1949, figs.17–42.

²*Ibid.*, figs.201–3; see Punyavijaya and Shah 1966, pp.40–1, for a description of others.

16 Manuscript cover

COLOUR PLATE VII

A wooden cover (*paṭlī*) of a palm-leaf manuscript.

This is the only part of this manuscript that is known. Its upper surface is divided into two unequal portions. It depicts on the left a conversation between two Jaina monks, who are labelled as Shri Jinadatta Sūri and Shri Gunasamudra Ācārya, with two laymen in respectful postures, and on

the right, beyond the stringhole, an image of the Jaina *Tīrthāṅkara*, Mahāvīra, with four lay devotees, and two chowrie-bearers. Jinadatta Sūri was one of the greatest Jaina teachers of Rajasthan in the 12th century. Born in Dholka in 1075, he became the pupil, and ultimately successor, of Jinavallabha Sūri, the 43rd Pontiff of the Kharataragaccha. During his pontificate he made frequent tours throughout Rajasthan and Gujarat, one of the most famous being to consecrate a temple of Mahāvīra at Marot in Marwar. This forms the subject of a *paṭlī* formerly in one of the Jaiselmer *bhaṇḍārs*¹, which is probably contemporary with the event. Three similar *paṭlīs* in all involving Jinadatta are now known, and it would be rash to assume that all of them must be contemporary with the great Jaina pontiff or have some personal connection with him. However, stylistically they all belong to the 12th century, and this small one probably to the latter part of the period. It seems to have been copied from, or at least to belong to the same school as, the contemporary version referred to above. This latter depicts the consecration scene in the centre of a much longer panel, with a conversation between Jinadatta and Jinaraksita on the left, and on the right between Jinadatta and a monk whose name has been somewhat damaged, but which has been read as Śrīguṇa(*cam*)-drācārya. It would be possible however to read it as Śrīguṇa(*samu*)drācārya, and hence be the same subject as in this smaller version. Indeed the two *aṅśaras* (syllables) of '*samu*' would fit the available space better than the one of '*cam*'. This small cover could then be seen as a version of part of the larger one. Both covers have the identical lotus pattern round the stringhole, with margins of a chain of small, white flowers, and the same *mar-vārī* leaf pattern forming a border round the cover.

Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Institute, Ahmadabad.

Provenance: Jaina *bhaṇḍār* in Jaiselmer.

Wooden cover, bevelled edges; 5.5 × 29cm; stringhole one third of way from left; painted exterior; plain interior, with flower designs added later.

Bibliography: Punyavijaya and Shah 1966.

¹Moti Chandra 1949, figs.190–2.

CHAPTER II

Manuscript Illumination during the Delhi Sultanate

The conquest of northern India by the armies of Shihāb ad-Dīn Ghori after the battle of Tarain in 1192 and the establishment of Muslim rule over the major part of the subcontinent for the next 500 years, although initially, and at intervals thereafter, destructive, yet enriched India's society with new blood and her art forms with new concepts and ideas.

Muslims are a people of the book, the revelation of God, the Holy Koran. By 1200 they had carried the arts of calligraphy and book illumination to supreme heights and were shortly to embark in Egypt and Iran on the most monumental period of book illumination ever known, in copies of the Koran produced on the most majestic and expansive scale, and embellished with gold and lapis lazuli. To this same period belong the earliest illustrated manuscripts of Arabic, and in the 14th century of Persian, literature. The Mongol conquest of much of the Middle East in the 13th century opened up its arts to the influence of China, particularly its book arts, and by the late 14th century there had emerged the classical norms of Iranian book illumination, which had such profound effect on the Indian book arts.

To copy the Holy Koran was in itself a most pious act; to do it superbly was an act that brought earthly praise and reward as well. The calligrapher was the highest artist known in the Islamic world, his primacy depending on his writing down the word of God. The illuminator and painter stood far beneath him. The Arabs, of course, frowned on both painting and sculpture as contrary to the Prophet's commandment and very rarely illustrated their manuscripts. The Iranians, who had much earlier traditions of manuscript illumination, probably before the Arab conquest, and certainly before the Mongol invasions which destroyed nearly every library in Iran, had fewer inhibitions about painting; but it was usually a private art, for the delectation of rulers and their courts. To the frontispieces and chapter-headings taken from Koranic illumination they added miniatures—true miniatures, illuminated with gold. And as no other people, they truly illustrated the text, interweaving script and paintings.

The rulers set up studios at their courts to produce books—to make the beautifully glazed and burnished paper, to write the text, to illuminate it, to paint the miniatures, and finally to bind the result in soft leather and to decorate it. This courtly bibliographic tradition was not fully established in Iran until the end of the 14th century. But the new Muslim rulers of India immediately introduced their own concepts of books. They, of course, had no truck with palm leaves and to begin with must have imported paper from Iran and elsewhere (there are early references to Syrian paper being used in India), before setting up their own production centres.

Very few manuscripts in Persian or Arabic have survived from the first two centuries of Muslim rule, perhaps because of the sack of Delhi in 1398 by Tīmūr. It is also a great problem distinguishing Indian Islamic manuscripts from Iranian ones, before the emergence of a distinct Indian